

## TRUE TALES OF THE OLD WEST.

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"No, I received these little testimonials from the Pit River tribe. It was among these same Injuns me and my pardner 'Red' did the thinning out I was speaking of."

I waited expectantly.

"In early days," the old man began, "my pardner 'Red' and me went into business, carrying mail and express matter from Shasta to the mining camps about.

The work paid pretty well, because the boys knew the risks we had to take, and when we would deliver one of 'em a letter he'd come down with the dust without ever stopping to weigh it.

"About sixteen miles east of the spot where Redding now stands, there was a big *rancheria* of Pit River Injuns, — a thousand or more of 'em, I should say. They were mostly armed with bows and arrows and they had only a few scrub ponies, so a white man, well mounted and with good weapons, could stand off quite a gang of 'em.

"Me and 'Red' always traveled together, and we never came to a spot that seemed a proper spot for an ambush, without tightening our cinches and getting our guns ready for business. Many a time a shower of arrows would spring like a flock of birds from some thick copse and never a human critter would we see. It was no uncommon thing for us to come across the body of an unlucky miner, his baggage and grub gone, stripped even of his clothing.

"The Injuns were not much interfered with and they kept getting bolder and bolder, until we had to take a couple of extry men along every trip, which kind of knocked off the profits of the business. Now and then we got scratched. I was laid up six weeks once by an arrow that took me in the back, and altogether the outlook in our line of work was rather gloomy.

"One day 'Red' says to me, 'Look here, old man, we must either scatter that ranch of Injuns or go out of business. Now put your wits to work and see what you can do for the firm.'

"I considered the matter carefully, and at last I hit on a scheme. 'Red' agreed with me that we could n't lose anything by undertaking it.

"The first step was to send to San

Francisco and get a lot of strychnine. I thought eighteen bottles would be enough though 'Red' allowed we ought to get more. Well, you would have thought me and my pardner had gone into the baker's business if you had seen us after that. We made up a terrible lot of bread, two hundred loaves, I should say at a guess, and into the dough we kneaded the eighteen bottles of p'izen. I guess the bread was a little bitter, but we knew Injuns was n't overly fastidious in the matter of grub.

"The next thing was to get the stuff to the Injuns without making them suspicious. We got three of our best horses ready, two of them for mounts and the other for a pack, — the last a fine gentle animal that would lead like a pet dog. After that we rigged up as if we were a couple of prospectors striking out for the mines. In our pack, mind you, there was n't a blessed thing but that p'izen bread, and we arranged it so that with a little jolting the loaves would come tumbling out.

"We left Shasta in the night, not caring to have everybody know what we were up to, and headed straight for the *rancheria*. We knew the lay of the land like a book, and we kept under cover until we were within a quarter of a mile of the campoodie, reaching there along in the forenoon. Then we came out on the hillside in view of the whole works.

"The Injuns got sight of us in about a second and came piling out, a whoopin' and a yellin', men, women, children, and dogs.

"We waited till they were most up, then we acted like we was scared and turned tail.

"Well, sir, as soon as our animals struck a lope the bread began falling out, and it kept on a-falling, and 'Red' laughed till he most rolled out of his saddle to see those hungry Injuns snap it up, for all the world like a lot of carp when you throw 'em a handful of crumbs.

"Did the scheme work? We did n't wait to see, but from circumstantial evidence I am inclined to think it did.

"We understood afterwards that a good many outsiders did n't approve. The Sacramento *Union* got hold of the story and sent up a man to investigate, and I was told that he roasted us brown, though

I am glad to say he never learned our names. He said that in one place he had counted ninety-three bodies, and I could have told him that that figure did n't represent the complete returns.

"Well, the *rancheria* moved. The Indians went away on up the Pit river as far as Modoc county, and never bothered us much after.

"Sometimes when they made a campoodie where we did n't care to have it, we would stick a loaf of bread on a pole

and put it where they would be sure to see it. The hint was enough; the next day the camp would be deserted, though the bread always remained untouched."

A little breeze had sprung up and the old man shivered.

"My blood is n't as thick as it used to be. Come into the house where it is warm and we can have a light; I hate to sit in the dark."

*Bradford Woodbridge.*

## SANTA CATALINA

BLUER than skies that bend over  
 Dim in the distance it lies,  
 Backward I gaze like a lover  
 As it fades from my longing eyes.

Oh island of sunshine and summer  
 On the breast of the western sea,  
 Can you give to the next new comer  
 All you have given to me?

Your dawn may for him blush as brightly,  
 Your mountain trails beckon away,  
 The foam may for him dance as lightly,  
 The waves splash as soft in the bay.

You may show him your sunset's splendor,  
 For him through the white mists may gleam  
 The kiss of the moonlight tender —  
 But you cannot give him *my* dream.

*Marion Pryn.*